DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 335 824 EC 300 566

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TITLE A Comparison of Self-Report and Perceived Self-Concepts between Rural and Urban Gifted Students.
PUB DATE Nov 90
NOTE 24p.; Paper presented at the Convention of the Mid-South Educational Research Association (New Orleans, LA, November 13-16, 1990).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Gifted; High Schools; *High School Students; *Rural Urban Differences; Rural Youth; *Self Concept; *Self Evaluation (Individuals); *Teacher Attitudes; Urban Youth

ABSTRACT

This study compared the self-concept of 112 gifted urban and 99 gifted rural students in grades 9-12, as reported by students themselves and as perceived by their teachers. The students and their teachers were administered the Florida Key Self-Concept Scale, which comprises 23 items with four subscales: relating, asserting, investing, and coping. The study found that: (1) as a total group, gifted students reported a higher learner self-concept than their teachers perceived; (2) teachers of gifted urban students perceived a higher learner self-concept than did teachers of gifted rural students; (3) urban gifted students reported a higher self-concept than did their rural counterparts; (4) urban gifted students and their teachers were in very close agreement on the evaluation of the students' learner self-concept; and (5) rural gifted students and their teachers differed on all four subscales of learner self-concept. Appendices contain a copy of the Florida Key Self-Concept Scale and a list of the items comprising each subscale. (Includes 12 references.) (JDD)

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ED335824

A Comparison of Self-Report And Perceived Self-Concepts Between Rural And Urban Gifted Students

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A Paper presented to the Mid-South Educational Research Association Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana, November 13-16, 1990.

EC 300576

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Rationale:

For many years, noted authorities have determined that a relationship exists between self-concept and school achievement. (Byrne 1984; Eshel and Kline, 1981; Purkey and Novak, 1984) . Shaffer (1989) in his textbook, Developmental Psychology: Childhood and Adolescence, defined self-concept as "one's sense of oneself as a separate individual who possesses a unique set of characteristics." According to Purkey and Novak (1984), no one is born with a self-concept; but, through the interactions with persons, places, policies, and programs- a self-concept emerges. These interactions act as catalysts for building the bonafide self-image.

As students enter school, new experiences come into focus and external environmental forces play a major role in developing attitudes as well as self-image . Harter (1982) presented research on self-concept indicating that even third-graders perceive themselves as either favorable or unfavorable. Erikson (1963) proposed a view that most adolescents decline in self-esteem due to the lack of reevaluating themselves and their goals. Erikson attributes this decline to physical, social, and cognitive changes occurring during puberty. According to Briaker (1988), in the article "Feel Better about Yourself," low self-esteem could be one of

the influential factors for school dropouts. Briaker later proposed a seven-step plan for raising self-esteem and helping a person to feel the best possible about himself. Canfield (1990), President of Self-Esteem Seminars, described a study by Gail Dusa that indicated a direct correlation between school success of high school students and self-esteem. Dusal's findings showed the self-esteem (experimental) group to have fewer absentees, more completion of homework assignments, more holders of class offices, and more graduates from high school at the end of four years. The key component to the experimental group was a 40 minute activity to build self-esteem administered every second Friday throughout the freshman year. Therefore, as students were taught to build positive self-images of themselves, higher goals were set and reached during the four year study.

Byrne and Shavelson (1987) investigated 832 students (412 males, 420 females) in grades 11 and 12 in relation to self-concept and gender differences for academic achievement in English and Mathematics. The purposes of the study were: a.) to test the invariance of a multidimensional, hierarchical self-concept (SC) structure for adolescent males and females, and b.) to present a statistically sophisticated methodological approach that integrates concerns about measurement, statistics, and theory into one conceptual, analytic framework.

A battery of self-concept instruments was administered to an intact mathematics classroom during a 50-minute period. All subjects of the sample were enrolled in both English and Mathematics classes and were administered the test during the month of April. The results of the study showed major gender differences in the self-concept structure where general and academic self-concept correlated higher with Mathematics self-concept than with English self-concept for males. The reverse was true for females. These findings supported previous research that girls have higher English self-concepts and lower Mathematics self-concepts than boys.

Williams and Andersen (1987) conducted a study to determine how high school students would like to have been remembered. At the University of Arizona, 671 undergraduate students were selected from diverse disciplines and classified as either feminine males, feminine females, masculine males, masculine females, or androgynous. The final sample size consisted of 206---26 feminine males, 36 feminine females, 36 masculine females, 36 masculine males, and 36 androgynous females. Researchers used the Bem Sex-Role Inventory (BSRI) and a questionnaire that allowed the student to indicate how he would like to be remembered from high school---brilliant student, leader in activities, or most popular. Results indicated that masculine students chose "brilliant student" and "athletic

star" whereas feminine and androgynous subjects both preferred "brilliant student" and "leader in activities" and "popular", respectively, rather than "athletic star."

As research has shown, self-concept is directly related to environmental factors and interactions with these environmental factors.

Problem:

The problem of this study focused upon the comparison of the self-report self-concept of gifted urban and rural students and the perceived self-concept of these gifted students as viewed by their teachers.

Null Hypotheses:

1) There will be no significant difference between the self-report self-concept of gifted students and the perceived self-concept of these gifted students by their teachers.

2) There will be no significant difference between the perceived self-concept of gifted students in urban and rural schools.

3) There will be no significant difference between the self-report self-concept of gifted students in urban and rural schools.

4) There will be no significant difference between the self-report and the perceived self-concept of urban gifted students.

5) There will be no significant difference between the self-report and the perceived self-concept of rural gifted students.

Definition of Terms:

Asserting - Assertive behavior in socially acceptable ways in the classroom.

Coping - Ability to cope and thereby achieve in school.

Investing - Confident to trust oneself and to try new things.

Relating - Positive relationships in the classroom.

Self-report - Student professing the beliefs and attitudes of himself/herself.

Perceived - Teacher inferred rating of the beliefs and attitudes of student.

Methods and Procedures:

The Florida Key Self-Concept Scale (self-report) was administered to 211 [rural (99) and urban (112)] gifted students in grades 9-12 during the 1989 spring semester in two separate high schools in northeast Louisiana. Four teachers of the gifted students, two in each high school, completed the instrument on each of their students (perceived).

The Florida Key Self-Concept Scale (APPENDIX A) was developed to measure self-concept of the learner, as well as the perceived self-concept of the learner by the teacher. (Purkey, Cage, Graves, 1973) The instrument is comprised of 23 items

with four subscales : 1) relating, 2) asserting, 3) investing, and 4) coping (APPENDIX B). The likert scale used in the Florida Key was divided zero to five with zero being "never" and five being "very often." The reliability of the instrument was .94. Additional reliability coefficients for the subscales are shown in Appendix C. (Fahey, 1982)

Analysis of Data:

Data from Florida Key instruments were entered and analyzed using the updated SPSSx statistical program on the IBM 4381 computer at Northeast Louisiana University. Appropriate t-tests were used to test each of the five hypotheses. The probability level was set at $p \leq .05$ for testing each hypothesis. The Cronbach alpha was used to ascertain internal reliability for each analysis.

Findings:

The results from the testing of hypotheses are shown in Table I. When both rural and urban gifted students are grouped together and a comparison made between self-report self-concept (by students) and perceived self-concept (by teachers) is made, significant differences were found favoring the students on three of the four subscales. Only on the subscale of investing was no significant difference found at the .05 probability level. These findings suggest that gifted students whether urban or rural, view themselves somewhat higher on the factors of relating, asserting and coping than do their teachers who teach them in gifted classes.

Table II displays the group means for the testing of hypothesis 2. These results show that teachers of gifted students in the urban high schools perceive their students as having a higher ability to relate, assert, invest, and cope in the classroom than did the teachers of the gifted students in the rural high school. This significant difference was most prominent on the subscales of asserting (possible range is 0 to 20) and investing (possible range is 0 to 35).

The data in Table III show the results of the testing of hypothesis 3. The same pattern of differences between urban and rural students is found in the self-report self-concept as

Table I
Self-Report Self-Concept Scores and Perceived
Self-Concept Scores by Their Teachers
for all Gifted Students

Subscale	$\bar{X}$	sd	t
Relating			
Teacher (Perceived)	18.92	4.04	3.29*
Student (Self-report)	20.11	3.36	
Asserting			
Teacher (Perceived)	11.74	5.44	2.59*
Student (Self-report)	12.97	4.21	
Investing			
Teacher (Perceived)	16.87	8.90	1.91
Student (Self-report)	18.36	6.84	
Coping			
Teacher (Perceived)	25.44	6.47	2.91*
Student (Self-report)	27.18	5.70	

*$p \leq .01$

Table II
Perceived Self-Concept Scores of Gifted Students
by Urban and Rural Teachers
of the Gifted

Subscale	$\bar{X}$	sd	t
Relating			
Urban	20.18	3.55	4.87*
Rural	17.57	4.11	
Asserting			
Urban	14.43	4.52	8.53*
Rural	8.86	4.86	
Investing			
Urban	22.08	6.83	10.92*
Rural	11.30	7.35	
Coping			
Urban	27.81	5.24	5.84*
Rural	22.90	6.72	

*$p \leq .001$

Table III

Self-Report Self-Concept Scores
of Urban and Rural
Gifted Students

Subscale	$\bar{X}$	sd	t
Relating			
Urban	20.60	3.27	2.24*
Rural	19.57	3.40	
Asserting			
Urban	14.30	3.56	5.12*
Rural	11.46	4.39	
Investing			
Urban	19.90	6.10	3.55*
Rural	16.60	7.24	
Coping			
Urban	28.18	5.33	2.75*
Rural	26.04	5.91	

*$p \leq .05$

was in the perceived self-concept. Significant differences were found favoring the urban gifted students on all subscales with the difference in investing slightly more than on the other three factors.

When the self-report self-concept of the urban gifted students is compared to the corresponding perceived self-concept provided by the urban gifted teachers, only one significant difference is found. As seen in Table IV, the fourth hypothesis is rejected only for the subscale of investing. These results show a very close agreement between the gifted students in the urban high school and the perceptions of them by their two gifted teaches on three of the four subscales.

In contrast, when the self-report self-concept of the rural gifted student is compared to the corresponding perceived self-concept provided by the rural gifted teachers, a significant difference is found on all four subscales. On every factor of the instrument, rural teachers perceived the ability of their student to relate, assert, invest, and cope in the classroom significantly lower than did the students. This was demonstrated most prominently on the factors of asserting and investing. (See Table V)

Table IV

Self-Report Self-Concept and
Perceived Self-Concept of
Urban Gifted Students

Subscale	$\bar{X}$	sd	t
Relating			
Teacher (Perceived)	20.18	3.55	.91
Student (Self-report)	20.60	3.27	
Asserting			
Teacher (Perceived)	14.43	4.52	.23
Student (Self-report)	14.30	3.56	
Investing			
Teacher (Perceived)	22.08	6.83	2.49*
Student (Self-report)	19.90	6.10	
Coping			
Teacher (Perceived)	27.81	5.24	.51
Student (Self-report)	28.18	5.33	

*$p \leq .05$

Table V

Self-Report Self-Concept and
Perceived Self-Concept of
Rural Gifted Students

Subscale	$\bar{X}$	sd	t
Relating			
Teacher (Perceived)	17.57	4.11	3.74*
Student (Self-report)	19.57	3.40	
Asserting			
Teacher (Perceived)	8.86	4.86	3.97*
Student (Self-report)	11.46	4.39	
Investing			
Teacher (Perceived)	11.30	7.35	5.12*
Student (Self-report)	16.60	7.24	
Coping			
Teacher (Perceived)	22.90	6.72	3.50*
Student (Self-report)	26.04	5.91	

*p.≤ .001

Conclusions:

The conclusions of this study were:

1) As a total group, gifted students had a higher learner self-concept of themselves than the perceived self-concept of them by their teachers

2) Teachers of gifted urban students perceived a higher learner self-concept of their students than did teachers of gifted rural students.

3) Urban gifted students possessed a higher learner self-concept of themselves than did their rural counterparts.

4) Urban gifted students and their teachers were in very close agreement on the evaluation of the students' learner self-concept.

5) In contrast, the rural gifted students and their teachers differed on all four subscales of learner self-concept.

Discussion:

The use of self-report and perceived methodology to ascertain student self-concept is relatively new. This study used this methodology with urban and rural high school students in northeast Louisiana and found very close agreement in the urban high school, when compared to the rural high school. This suggests several things. One, that the "gifted" program in the urban high school, compared to the rural high school was structured so that the teaching-learning relationship between teachers and students was more highly involved and therefore teachers were better able to assess students abilities to relate, assert, invest and cope in the learning environment. Or two, the "gifted" teachers in the rural school, based upon their background and experience, actually saw less ability in their students to relate, assess, invest and cope in the classroom. Or three, the instrument is in fact sensitive to differences in urban and rural student learner self-concept.

Given the third proposition, this study concludes that urban gifted high school students do possess a higher learner self-concept than do rural high school students and the investigators welcome others who would be willing to replicate the study in similar populations.

APPENDIX A

Florida Key

NEVER-0; VERY SELDOM-1; ONCE IN AWHILE-2;
OCCASIONALLY-3; FAIRLY OFTEN-4; VERY OFTEN-5

1. Get along with other students?
2. Get along with teachers?
3. Keep calm when things go wrong?
4. Say good things about his/her school?
5. Tell the truth about his/her school work?
6. Speak up for his/her own ideas?
7. Offer to speak in front of the class?
8. Offer to answer questions in class?
9. Ask meaningful questions in class?
10. Exhibit confidence in his/her school work?
11. Persists in his/her school endeavors?
12. Talk to others about his/her school work?
13. Join in school activities?
14. Seek out new things to do in school on his/her own?
15. Offer to do extracurricular work in the classroom?
16. Spend time helping others?
17. Show an interest in others' work?
18. Show interest in being a leader?
19. Initiate school projects?
20. Finish his/her school work?
21. Pay attention to class activities?
22. Do his/her school work carefully?
23. Talk to teachers about personal concerns?

APPENDIX B

Subscale Structure of Florida Key:

Item No.	Subscale
	Subscale 1: Coping
11	persist in his/her school endeavors
21	pay attention to class activities
20	finish his/her school work
22	do his/her school work carefully
13	join in school activities
12	talk to others about his/her school work
10	exhibit confidence in his/her school work
	Subscale 2: Relating
4	say good things about his/her school
3	keep calm when things go wrong
5	tell the truth about his/her school work
2	get along with teachers
1	get along with other students
	Subscale 3: Investing
19	initiate school projects
16	spend time helping others
17	show an interest in others' work
15	offer to do extracurricular work in the classroom
18	show interest in being a leader
14	seek out new things to do in school on his/her own
23	talk to teachers about personal concerns
	Subscale 4: Asserting
7	offer to speak in front of the class
6	speak up for his/her own ideas
8	offer to answer questions in class
9	ask meaningful questions in class

APPENDIX C

Subscale	Alpha Reliability
Relating	.76
Asserting	.86
Investing	.89
Coping	.87

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